United Nations A/60/838

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 May 2006
English
Original: Spanish

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 112 (e)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 20 April 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to extend to you my warm greetings, having recently arrived in this city as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations. I hope to have the opportunity further to enhance the ties of cooperation and friendship existing between the Permanent Mission and the Secretariat which you so capably lead.

This letter relates to the elections for membership in the new Human Rights Council, which are to be held 9 May 2006 in the United Nations General Assembly. We would like to share with you some of the reasons why our country is standing for election to such an important subsidiary organ of the General Assembly.

In this connection please find below a short aide-memoire which we have prepared and distributed for this purpose, after which we will add a few comments further explaining the reasons why we wish to contribute to the promotion, dissemination and defence of universal human values.

Aide-memoire in support of the candidacy of Honduras for election to membership in the Human Rights Council

Honduras recognizes that fundamental human rights are inalienable and inherent to all human beings. Because of their nature, they must be recognized, respected and promoted by everyone, beginning with national and international legal systems.

Everyone must be given fair and equal treatment when universal human values are promoted and defended; this is the only way fully to achieve the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in this area. The Human Rights Council has an important responsibility in that it will be studying and/or adopting resolutions that address specific cases, but which have universal implications.

06-33989 (E) 050506 050506

Honduras has acceded to the international human rights Conventions and has ratified the vast majority of the international instruments on the projection, promotion and defence of the inalienable rights of Honduran men, women and children. All Hondurans have the right to seek a remedy before the National Human Rights Commission, which was established in order to guarantee the rights and freedoms set forth in the Constitution of the Republic and in international treaties and conventions.

Honduras has maintained an open door policy with regard to the human rights institutions. It recently hosted a visit by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, with whom the national authorities worked to arrive at agreements and measures which are currently being adopted, in line with the recommendations contained in the Special Rapporteur's report, with positive results.

Honduras supported the establishment of the Human Rights Council for the purposes and objectives for which it was proposed, to ensure the effective protection of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all the international human rights instruments. We are concerned, however, that developing countries will not have an opportunity to participate in the Council established for this purpose, as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. Equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the new Council is essential.

The Executive Office of the National Human Rights Commission of Honduras is the shortest administrative channel for the protection and promotion of human rights, and has therefore been institutionally strengthened since its establishment. The National Human Rights Commission Organization Act, introduced by Decree No. 153-95 of the Congress of the Republic of Honduras, which has been in force since its publication in Official Gazette No. 28,811 of 21 November 1995, governs our activities aimed at better and more effective protection of the human rights of the people of Honduras and of the remedies available to them.

The National Human Rights Commission works in the following key areas:

The "democracy and participation" area, designed to address the situation of political rights such as participatory rights. This broad conception enables us to use a single sector to address, inter alia, the right to vote (active suffrage), the right to stand for election (passive suffrage), freedom of association and freedom of expression.

The "security and justice" area deals with those civil rights most closely related to the institutional responsibilities of the criminal justice system; these include the right to life, to physical integrity and to personal liberty, as well as the right to effective legal protection.

The "development and equity" area covers economic, social and cultural rights and solidarity-based human rights. Our understanding in this regard is that poverty reduction and the enjoyment of human rights are not two different endeavours; rather, they are two approaches to the same endeavour and are mutually reinforcing, as pointed out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This is the perspective used in gauging progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, which our country pledged to achieve five years ago.

Honduras, a founding member of the United Nations, has been a member of the current Commission on Human Rights, which will cease to exist in May 2006, for only two years and six months. We have participated in the Commission's work with enthusiasm and dedication, and have sought to ensure that the delicate issues at stake are approached with balance and fairness. On 19 July 2005, we submitted a communication (MH/424/2006) indicating our desire to seek another term on the Commission.

On 22 March 2006, by note No. 160, we reformulated our earlier statement, indicating that we now seek election to the Human Rights Council, given the changes made in the international human rights machinery as a result of the reform process.

* * *

I have the honour to inform you that my country has accepted, without reservation, the jurisdiction of:

- The International Court of Justice;
- The Inter-American Court of Human Rights;
- The International Criminal Court;
- The Central American Court of Justice.

Honduras has ratified and is a party to the following international human rights conventions and instruments:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The foregoing clearly attests to Honduras's wide-ranging, transparent commitment to strengthening and improving the promotion of these rights. As a developing country, Honduras believes that its example and experience will help to ensure balance in the Council's consideration of the issues brought before it.

Our Government considers that, at the global level, no country should be solely an object of scrutiny by the international community; rather, it should also be an active participant working in an atmosphere of cooperation, which will be essential for the formation of the new Council. The transparency we seek cannot be achieved if we are left on the sidelines or if countries focus on disputing whether others can or should be allowed to participate.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter issued in the official languages of the Organization and circulated to Member States under agenda item 112 (e).

(*Signed*) Iván **Romero Martínez**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative